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NATIONAL  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**U.S., CANADA ANNOUNCE PLAN TO REINTRODUCE  
KILLER WHALE "L98" TO FAMILY POD**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and its Canadian counterpart, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), today announced a cooperative plan to return the juvenile killer whale, known as L98, to its southern resident population. The four-year old whale separated from his family group, and has been living alone in Nootka Sound on the west coast of British Columbia since the summer of 2001. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

NOAA Fisheries will have a public meeting to discuss the plan on April 5 at 5 p.m. at the Rosario Resort & Spa on Orcas Island. Another public meeting is being planned later this month in Seattle.

The plan has two concurrent paths. First, if L98's pod ends up near Nootka Sound this spring as biologists hope it will, the two agencies will attempt to lead the whale to his family pod. Historically, sightings during this time of year are rare and both agencies are asking the public and other government agencies, including the Coast Guard and Navy, to report any killer whale sightings, their location, the number of animals and direction of travel along the outer coast of Vancouver Island to NOAA Fisheries at [LPodAlert@noaa.gov](mailto:LPodAlert@noaa.gov).

Because L98's pod may not be located near Nootka Sound this spring, the agencies are also planning a capture/relocation approach for this summer/fall when the southern resident killer whales are found around the San Juan Islands.

NOAA Fisheries and DFO began working on the joint plan when the U.S. and Canadian governments each pledged \$100,000 toward the reintroduction effort.

Beyond returning the young animal to his family, the re-introduction plan is necessary because the whale has developed unwanted behaviors, damaging property and putting people at risk by seeking out boaters and float planes, during his separation. Reintroduction of L98 to his family pod provides the best opportunity to end these risky behaviors while allowing him to remain in the wild.

A copy of the plan and other related information on killer whales are available at [www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov).

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>